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of the

19th & 20th Centuries

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 So many a word 'twixt them there pass'd
 In amiable way.

Sir Strange he said for Queen Dagmar.

2.

"Hear Strange hear! Thou for a time
 Thy native land must leave;
 Thou shalt away to Bohemia far
 My young bride to receive."

3.

Then answer'd Strange Pbbeson,
 To answer he was not slow:
 "Who shall attend me of thy liegemen,
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PLATE II.



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See Item No. 207.

PLATE III.

Over its beam, and so to mortals lent
 Arts, might, means and perfect judgement;
 That in I expiate in his agony,
 Hang here in fetters, weak the blenching sky.
 Ah, at me - what a sound
 What a fragrance sweeps up from a prison ^{within}
 Of a god or a mortal, or nature between
 Sweeping up to his rock where he rest, ^{his bosom}
 I have sight of my pains, or my cruel strain
 See to god in his anguish & chain
 He god Zeus hate it sore
 And his gods hate again
 All as many as feed on his glorified floor
 Because I loved mortals too rich
 Alas me! - what a marmion ^{evermore!} motion
 As of birds that are near -
 And the air under wings
 The soft stroke of their wings
 And all life that approaches, I wait for
 in fear.
 Groups of sea nymphs -
 Dear nothing to our troop
 Floats lovingly up

With a sick oaring stroke
 I wings stured to the rock -
 Having offered to soul of our father below
 To the sales of swift bearing love not me a sound
 And the clank of the iron the mallets blow
 Smote down the fulcrum
 Of my cushions of old
 And struck it red light in a black to my brow
 And I sprung up bereft of in haste to behold
 And rushed forth in my chariot of a man's might
 Alas me, Alas me!
 Ye offspring of deities who come at her breast
 Many children - and eke of Oceanus - he
 Who curls around to east with perpetual unrest
 Behold me and me
 How transfixed with the fang
 Of a fetter I hang
 On the high-jutting rocks of his figure & keep
 My uncorroded watch over the world & the deep
 I behold the Prometheus - get now, get now
 A terrible cloud whose rain is tears

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In 1851 Charlotte, whilst returning to Haworth after a visit to London, called on Mrs. Gaskell at Plymouth Grove, near Manchester, and this visit is described by Miss Brontë in a letter to a friend, Mrs. Smith, mother of the publisher, Mr. G. Smith (Smith, Elder & Co.), with whom she had stayed in London. This autograph letter is included in this volume; it is only partly published by Mrs. Gaskell in her "*Life of Charlotte Brontë*," she omitting, with natural diffidence, Charlotte's complimentary reference to herself.

"She is a woman of many fine qualities, and deserves the epithet which I find is generally applied to her—charming. Her family consists of four little girls—all more or less pretty and intelligent—these scattered through the rooms of a somewhat spacious house—seem to fill it with liveliness and gaiety."

In September, 1853, Mrs. Gaskell made a return visit to Miss Brontë, and of this visit she has left a lengthy descriptive account, the original autograph manuscript of which is preserved herein; it appears to be unpublished, and was apparently sent by her to John Forster, the biographer of Dickens. Another, quite distinct, description of this

(Continued over)

The Brontës—*continued.***Brontë** (Charlotte)—*continued.*

visit is given by her in the "Life." The manuscript gives a most fascinating account of the Brontë family, their family life, peculiarities, work, &c.

Charlotte, in 1854, married the Rev. A. B. Nicholls, but her wedded life was destined to be of very short duration; never in the best of health, she died in the following year.

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We give a few extracts from these letters:—

" How is 'Shirley' getting on, and what is now the general feeling respecting the work?"

"As far as I can judge from the tone of the Newspapers, it seems that those who were most charmed with 'Jane Eyre' are the least pleased with 'Shirley'; they are disappointed at not finding the same excitement, interest, stimulus; while those who spoke disparagingly of 'Jane Eyre,' like 'Shirley' a little better than her predecessor. I suppose its dryer matter suits their dryer minds. But I feel that the fiat for which I wait does not depend on Newspapers, except indeed such newspapers as the 'Examiner.' The monthlies and quarterlies will pronounce it, I suppose. Mere novel-readers, it is evident, think 'Shirley' something of a failure: still the majority of the notice has on the whole been favourable: that in the 'Standard of Freedom' was very kindly expressed, and coming from a dissenter, William Howitt, I wonder thereat. . . ."

" Whenever you send me a new supply of books, may I request that you will have the goodness to include one or two of Miss Austen's. I am often asked whether I have read them, and I excite amazement by replying in the negative. I have read none except 'Pride and Prejudice.' Miss Martineau mentioned 'Persuasion' as the best.

"Thank you for your account of the 'First Performance.' It was cheering and pleasant to read it, for in your animated description I seemed to realise the scene; your criticism also enables me to form some idea of the plan. Lewes is a strange being. I always regret that I did not see him when in London. He seems to me, clever, sharp, and coarse; I used to think him sagacious, but I believe now that he is no more than shrewd, for I have discovered once or twice that he brings forward, as grand discoveries of his own, information he has casually received from others, true sagacity disdains little tricks of this sort. But though Lewes has many smart and some deserving points about him, he has nothing truly great; and nothing truly great, I should think, will he ever produce. Yet he merits just such successes as the one you describe, triumphs

(Continued over)

The Brontës—*continued.***Brontë (Charlotte)**—*continued.*

public, brief, and noisy. Notoriety suits Lewes. Fame, were it possible that he could achieve her, would be a thing uncongenial to him: he could not wait for the solemn blast of her trumpet, sounding long, and slowly waxing louder. . . .

"I believe both 'Shirley' and 'Jane Eyre' are being a good deal read in the north just now; but I only hear fitful rumours from time to time. I ask nothing, and my life of anchorite seclusion shuts out all bearers of tidings. . . ."

"The perusal of Southey's Life has lately afforded me much pleasure; the autobiography with which it commences is deeply interesting and the letters which follow are scarcely less so, disclosing as they do a character most estimable in its integrity and a nature most amiable in its benevolence, as well as a mind admirable in its talents. Some people assert that Genius is inconsistent with domestic happiness, and yet Southey was happy at home and made his home happy; he not only loved his wife and children *though* he was a poet, but he loved them the better *because* he was a poet. He seems to have been without taint of worldliness; London, with its pomps and vanities, learned coteries and their dry pedantry rather scared than attracted him; he found his prime glory in his genius, and his chief felicity in home-affections. I like Southey.

"I have likewise read one of Miss Austen's works 'Emma,' read it with interest and with just the degree of admiration which Miss Austen herself would have thought sensible and suitable; anything like warmth or enthusiasm; anything energetic, poignant, heart-felt, is utterly out of place in commending these works: all such demonstrations the authoress would have met with a well-bred sneer, would have calmly scorned as outré and extravagant. She does her business of delineating the surfaces of the lines of genteel English people curiously well. There is a Chinese fidelity, a miniature delicacy in the painting: she ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him by nothing profound: the Passions are perfectly unknown to her; she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood; even to the Feelings she vouchsafes no more than an occasional graceful but distant recognition; too frequent converse with them would ruffle the smooth elegance of her progress. Her business is not half so much with the human heart as with the human eyes, mouth, hands and feet; what sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study, but what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of Life and the sentient target of Death, *this* Miss Austen ignores; she no more, with her mind's eye, beholds the heart of her race, than each man, with bodily vision, sees the heart in his heaving breast. Jane Austen was a complete and most sensible lady, but a very incomplete and rather insensible (*not senseless*) woman; if this is heresy, I cannot help it. . . ."

"I herewith send you a very roughly written copy of what I have to say about my sisters. When you have read it you can better judge whether the word 'Notice' or 'Memoir' is the most appropriate. I think the former. Memoir seems to me to express a more circumstantial and different sort of account. My aim is to give a just idea of their identity, not to write any narration of their simple, uneventful lives. I depend on you for faithfully pointing out whatever may strike you as faulty. I could not write it in the conventional form—that I found impossible. . . ."

"I have to thank you for the care and kindness with which you have assisted me throughout in correcting these 'Remains.'

"Whether, when they are published, they will appear to others, as they do to me, I cannot tell. I hope not. And indeed I suppose what to me is bitter pain will only be soft pathos to the general public.

"Miss Martineau has several times lately asked me to go and see her; and though this is a dreary season for travelling northward, I think if papa continues pretty well I shall go in a week or two. . . ."

"I felt some disappointment at the non-arrival of the proof-sheets of 'Wuthering Heights,' a feverish impatience to complete the revision is apt to beset me, the work of

The Brontës—*continued.***Brontë (Charlotte)**—*continued.*

looking over papers, could not be gone through with impunity or with unaltered spirits; associations too tender, regrets too bitter sprang out of it; meantime, the Cornhill books now as heretofore, are my medicine; affording a solace which could not be yielded by the very same books produced from a common library. . . ."

" As you wished me to say what I thought of the 'School for Fathers,' I hastened to read it, the book seems to me, clever, interesting, very amusing, and likely to please generally. There is a merit in the choice of ground which is not yet too hackneyed; the comparative freshness of subject, character and epoch give the tale a certain attractiveness. There is also, I think, a graphic rendering of situation, and a lively talent for describing whatever is visible and tangible, what the eye meets on the *surface* of things. The humour appears to me such as would answer well on the stage; most of the scenes seem to demand dramatic accessories to give them their full effect. But I think one cannot with justice bestow higher praise than this. To speak candidly, I felt, in reading a tale, a wondrous hollowness in the moral sentiment; a strange dilettante shallowness in the purpose and feeling. After all 'Jack' is not much better than a 'Tony Lumpkin,' and there is very great breadth of choice between the clown he is and the fop his father would have made him. The grossly material life of the old English fox-hunter and the frivolous existence of the fine gentleman present extremes, each in its way so repugnant that one feels half inclined to smile when called upon to sentimentalise over the lot of a youth forced to pass from one to the other; torn from the stables to be ushered, perhaps, into the ball-room. Jack dies mournfully indeed, and you are sorry for the poor fellow's untimely end; but you cannot forget that if he had not been thrust into the way of Colonel Penruddock's weapon he might possibly have broken his neck in a fox-hunt. The character of Sir Thomas Warren is excellent; consistent throughout. That of Mr. Addison not bad, but sketchy, a mere outline—wanting colour and finish. The man's portrait is there, and his costume, and fragmentary anecdotes of his life; but where is the man's nature—soul and self? I say nothing about the female characters—not one word; only that Lydia seems to me like a pretty little actress, prettily dressed, gracefully appearing and disappearing, and reappearing in a genteel comedy, assuming the proper sentiments of her part with all due tact and naiveté and—that is all. . . ."

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“ Our child will soon be three years old. He has earnest blue eyes, and a proud forehead shining out of a maze of golden ringlets. The loveliest, more spiritual little creature I ever knew in the shape of a child, but too excitable, too intense—drawing, writing, singing, dancing, knowing all his letters, though we do all we can to keep him back, for we dreaded a precocious child from the first—it does not mean much, you know. . . . Such a dangerous treasure he is to us, in a world like this without locks and bolts, except for the clasping hand of God, which closes gently—Oh, we should trust it, without any mixture of fear. Dear Mr. Owen said the last time we saw him: ‘Take care not to make an idol of that child.’ Just afterwards, he was unwell, and my heart in its pain, kept repeating to me ‘Idol, idol.’ . . .” Etc.

Browning (Mrs. E. B.)—*continued*.

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"And wilt thou then these simple lines approve?
Oh! if thou wilt, my labours are beguiled!
Then sweetly smile with kind parental love
And gently bless the efforts of thy child!!
I seek not laurels! oh! I seek not fame!
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Affection lingers on a Mother's name,
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Browning (Mrs. E. B.)—*continued.*

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Winter destroys, but gentle Spring renews!
Like them, the world of rhetoric affords
In dying lustre, an old age of words—
While others bursting into youthful bloom—
Shed their redundant honors on their tomb.

.....
Tho' Caesars male our wondering eyes may meet,
That proudly stand, the bulwark of our fleet,
Where Neptune, guarded from the Northwinds roar,
Usurps the verdant empire of the shore!
The Marsh, whose barren plain is taught to give
The grain by which the neighbouring Cities live!
Yon Stream, that erst the smiling fields o'eran,
Curbs his indignant waves, & yields to man!
Yet all must fade, the glorious, and the great;
Then how can words avoid impending fate?

.....
Homer, Omnipotent in epic lore
Points to the fields ensanguined with the war,
Hiero, let the poet follow, when he sings
The deeds of Heroes, and the fame of Kings!
Elegiac strains first gently swelled, t'impart
The soft complaining of the breaking heart,
But now their undulating course beguiles
Where young Love lingers, & where pleasure smiles.”

Etc., etc.

Browning (Mrs. E. B.)—*continued.*

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"The Sprite of blessed Poesy
Hath been a blessed Sprite to me:
I have communed with her power,
From my childhood, to this hour.
.

Browning (Mrs. E. B.)—*continued.*

“ Stanzas on her Love for Poetry ”—*continued.*

And I can call to mind no spot
Of beauty, where her power is not.
In the shade or in the sheen,
There, I wot, her sign hath been.

I as I pass amidst the throng
They shall turn on my lips to song;
For the Sprite of blessed Poesy
Is aye a pleasant Sprite to me.” Etc.

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AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT OF THIS POEM.

Comprising 8 verses of 6 lines each on 3 pp., 8vo.

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The original autograph manuscript of one of her last poems. It commences:—

“ When Victor Emanuel the King,
Went down to his Lucca that day,
The people, each vaunting the thing
As he gave it, gave all things away--
In a burst of fierce gratitude say,
As they tore out their hearts for the King.” Etc.

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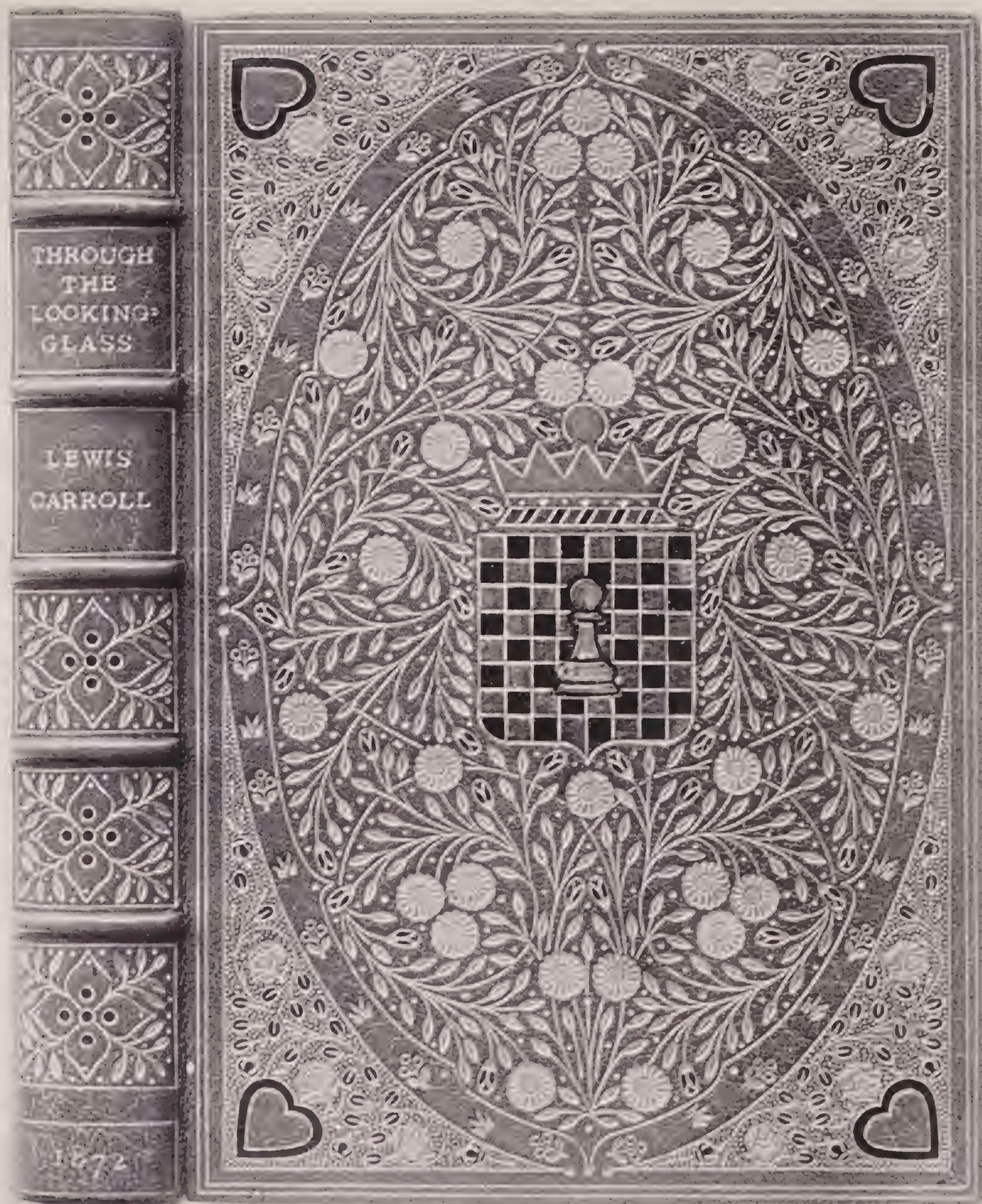
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"I send down to you by this post a certain satire lately published, and in return for the three & sixpence expenditure upon it, only beg that if you should guess the author, you will keep his name secret, at least for the present. . . I am glad to hear you like Cambridge, firstly because to hear that you are happy is pleasant to one who wishes you all possible enjoyment, and in the last place, I admire the novelty of the sentiment—Alma Mater was to me 'injuncta Novarcar,' and the old Beldam only gave me my M.A. degree because she could not avoid it, you know what a farce a noble Cantab must perform. I am going abroad if possible in the spring, and before I depart, I am collecting the pictures of my most intimate Schoolfellows, I have already a few, and shall want yours or my cabinet will be incomplete." Etc.

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"I have been very glad to hear you are well and well doing, and that you stopped Master Cawthorne in his foolish attempt to republish the E.B. and S.R." And again on October 23, 1817: "I am glad that you and the Chancellor clapped an extinguisher on Master Cawthorne. I thought the person's impudence would get him into a scrape."

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My youthful nymphs, alas! are flown:
E— is a wife, and C— a mother,
And Carolina sighs alone,
And Mary's given to another:

And though the sun, with genial rays,
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The poem commences:—

"Mary Ann was a spinster in Southwell well known.
The darling was she of her parents alone,
The plague of her fellows by day and by Night,
So few in her presence could e'er find Delight,
For no maiden surpassed or perhaps ever can
In prudish Demeanour the prim Mary Ann.

Her form was not faultless though aided by Art,
Her carriage was stately, though melting her Heart,
On her mien her staymaker bestowed his best Grace;
And her mind stood confessed in the Shape of her face.
Her dark sparkling Eyes a gay Boldness bedecked,
But a stiff Education their glances had check'd.

Ah me! would she sigh in a tone that would melt
The Bachelor near, could he ever have felt,
Ah me! would she sigh, past and gone is the Day,
When I hoped that my father would give me away.
My fancy what sad gloomy presage appalls,
Since the Captain no longer appears at our Balls.

Byron (Lord) Original MSS.—continued.

“ Prim Mary Ann ”—continued.

In Southwell there happened to be at this Time,
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No very great praise of this Youth we afford,
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A mighty aversion he had to a Wife,
And he spoke to this nymph just three times in his life.”
Etc., etc.

“ RAIL ON—RAIL ON YE HEARTLESS CREW! ”

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“ Rail on. Rail on ye heartless crew!
My strains were never meant for you,
Remorseless rancour still reveal,
And damn the verse you cannot feel.
Invoke those kindred passions aid,
Whose baleful strings your breasts pervade!
Crush, if you can, the hopes of youth!
Trampling regardless on the Truth.
My path with thorns you cannot strew,
Nay more, my warmest thanks are due,
When such as you revile my name,
Bright beams the rising sun of fame
Chasing the shades of envious night
Outshining every critic light.
Such, such, as you will serve to shew
Each radiant tint with higher glow.
Vain is the feeble cheerless toil,
Your efforts on yourselves recoil,
New glory still for me you raise,
Yours is the censure, mine the praise.”

*** These verses were apparently called forth by the criticisms passed on Byron's “ Fugitive Pieces.”

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A.L.S. to R. B. Hoppner—*continued*.

—the whole family of Gamba, obliged to go to Florence for the present, the father and son for politicians. . . . I have determined to remove to Switzerland, and they also. Indeed my life here is not supposed to be particularly safe, but that has been the case for this twelvemonth past and is therefore not the primary consideration. . . . I shall bring Allegra with me. The Gambas are at Florence but have authorized me to treat for them. You know or do not know, that they are great patriots, and both, but the son in particular very fine fellows. This I know, for I have seen them lately in awkward situations, not pecuniary, but personal, and they behaved like heroes, neither yielding nor retracting.

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(Continued over)

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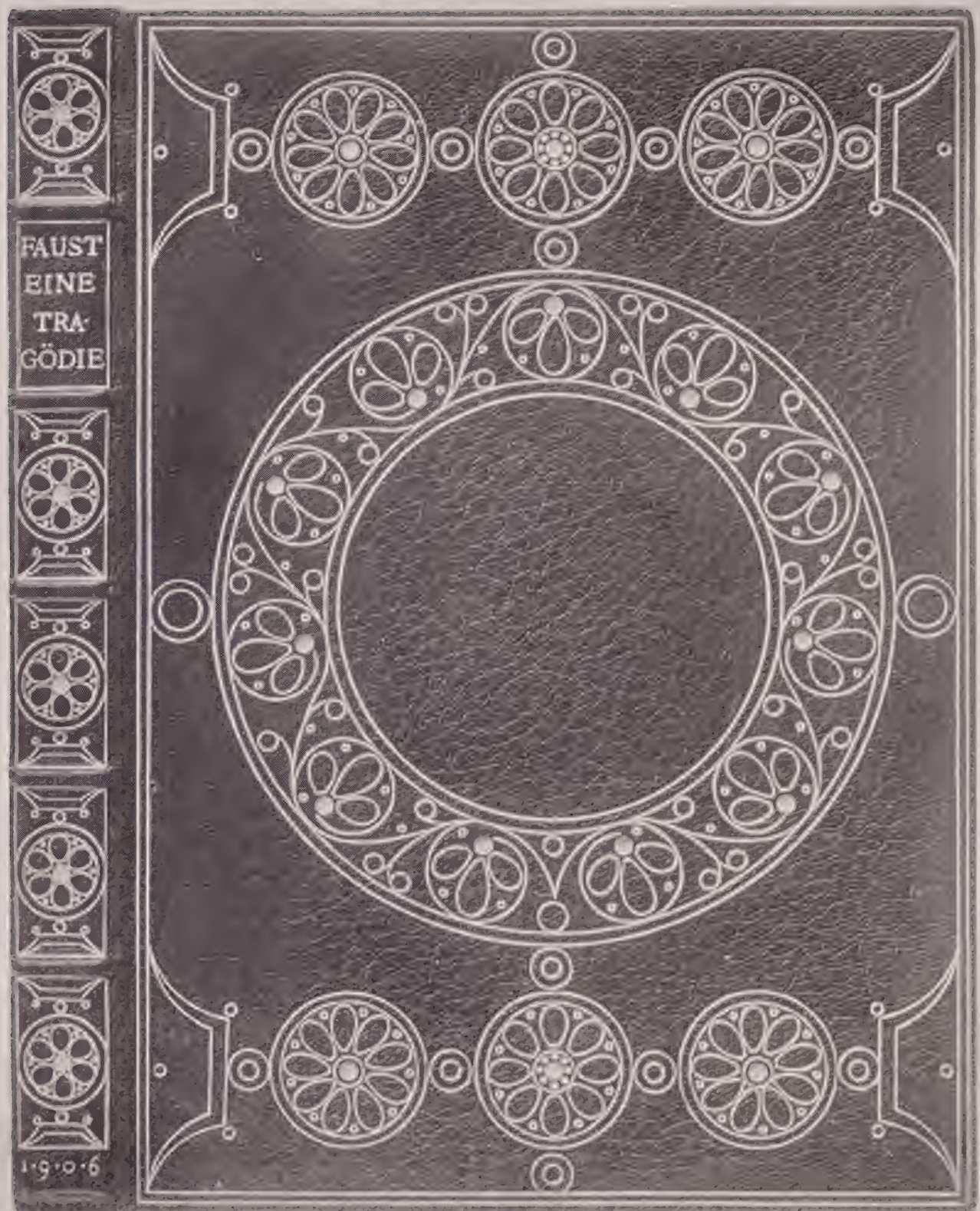
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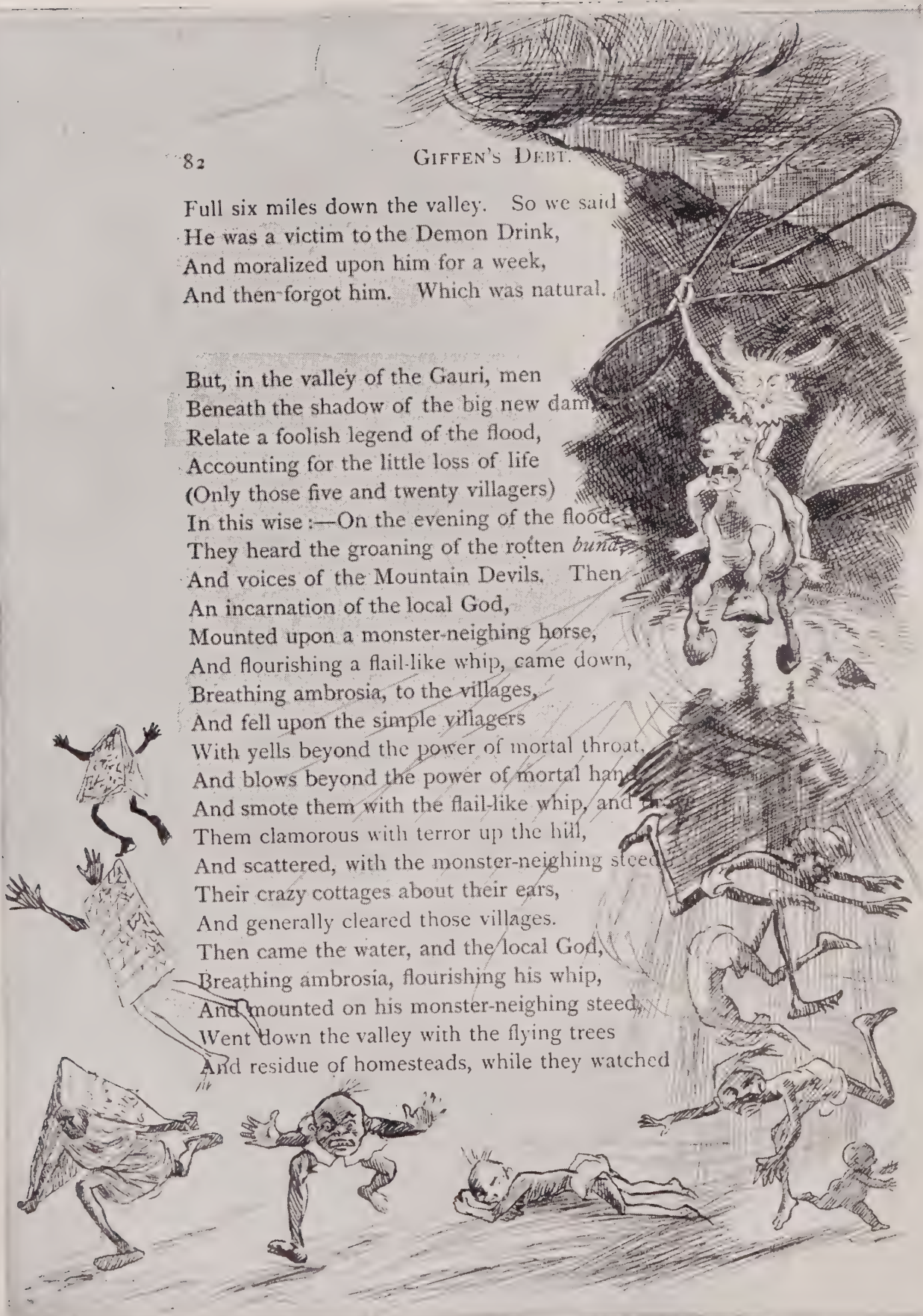
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*** Part of the letterpress of this little book is attributed to Charles Dickens, on the authority of the publisher's son, Mr. William Tegg. See his letter on the subject in "Notes and Queries," May 8th, 1875, and two articles on the book which appeared in Walford's Antiquarian, July, 1887, and in The Gentleman's Magazine, December, 1889. Both external and internal evidence appears to support this idea of authorship. The book is of the utmost rarity, having been subjected to the destructive treatment of juvenile readers and possessors during nearly a century that has elapsed since its publication.

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(1) 22nd October, 1839. 1 full page, 4to. Doughty Street. To Robert Philips of Prestwick near Manchester. As to his wife's health preventing him attending an Anniversary meeting at the Athenaeum, Manchester.

(2) 2nd October, 1845. 4 pp., 8vo. Devonshire Terrace. To his friend Clarkson Stanfield, the marine painter. Referring to the illustrations for his forthcoming Xmas book, "Cricket on the Hearth."

"I need not say how much I should value another little sketch from your extraordinary hand, in this Year's small volume, to which Mac again does the frontispiece. . . . I know perfectly well, that nothing can pay you for the devotion of any fragment of your time to such a use of your art. . . . I am not the sole proprietor of these little books; and it would be monstrous in you if you were to dream of putting a scratch into a second one, without some shadowy reference to the other partners—ten thousand times more monstrous in me, if any consideration on earth could induce me to permit it, which nothing will or shall." Etc.

(3) 7th September, 1847. 2 pp., 8vo. Broadstairs. To his brother Alfred Dickens. Offering to stand Godfather to his brother's child; mentioning his own youngest son Sydney, whom he called "The Spectre"; and referring to a number of friends.

"I call our last young man The Spectre—in consequence of his having unnaturally large eyes, which he stares with in a frightful manner." Etc.

(4) 2nd December, 1850. 1 page, 8vo. Devonshire Terrace. To Mr. Joyce of Bradbury & Evans, publishers. Referring to his "Christmas Carol."

(5) 27th June, 1851. 2 pp., 8vo. "Office of Household Words." To Daniel Maclise, the painter. As to giving Evans (Bradbury & Evans) a "handsome dinner" at the "Star and Garter," Richmond.

(6) 16th May, 1856. 2 pp., 8vo. Tavistock House. To Viscount Raynham. Mentioning his plan of retiring to Boulogne for "Country-ease and country work through the long summer days."

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(9) 9th August, 1869. 1 page, 8vo. Gads Hill Place. To his son Henry F. Dickens. On private family matters.

(10) 7th April, 1870. 1 page, 8vo. "Office of All the Year Round." To J. S. Le Fanu, the novelist and journalist. Being one of Dickens' last letters, written the year of his death; he refers to a proposed contribution by Le Fanu for the pages of "All the Year Round."

I 123 Autograph Letter Signed to Sir John Bowring.

1½ pp., 8vo. *Gad's Hill Place*, 31st October, 1860.

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"First let me congratulate you on your marriage, and wish you all happiness and prosperity.

"Secondly, I must tell you that I was greatly vexed with the Chatham people for not giving me early notice of your Lecture. In that case I should (of course) have presided as President of the Institution, and should have asked you to honour my Falstaff house here. . . .

"Thanks for your paper, which I have sent to the Printers with much pleasure."

"We heard of your accident here, and of your 'making nothing of it.' I said that you didn't make much of disasters, and that you took poison (from Natives) as quite a matter of course in the way of business."

I 124 Autograph Letter Signed to Rev. W. Elwin.

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"I have not been in the habit of attending that dinner, have only done so twice, in about twenty years, consequently my non-attendance is no new or marked thing. Then, observe, if I were there, I could hardly be there without speaking. . . . I have still a rather strong misgiving that the authorities would be scared if Mr. Blewitt reported that I had informed him of my intention to come, and that they would very much rather on the whole that I stayed away. . . .

"I have only one desire, and that is, to act in good humour and good taste, and really hold out the hand of thorough good fellowship to them all. How can I want to work against them in so gallant a cause, if we can but work together!"

Dickens (Charles)—*continued*.

“OUR MUTUAL FRIEND,” ETC.

1125 **Autograph Letter Signed** to his friend Rev. Wm. Harness.

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“I am, and have been, hard at work at your conversion—to the opinion that the story of Our Mutual Friend is very interesting and was from the first tending to a purpose which you couldn’t foresee until I chose to take you into my confidence. Modest this—but true.”

WITH NOM DE PLUME.

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In homely form to bring her to like pass,
And shew her Image on his shatter'd glass:
May any license with your favor take—
Receive it kindly, for your servant's sake.”

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.
.
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“I have had forty five years of a very happy married life—then very probably as a consequence of a severe fall, my wife’s reason underwent a very gradual change, until she became almost like a child, but always sweet tempered, quick, docile, until by gentle gradations she faded away from life. We were spared all the pain of seeing the body lose its comeliness and become a wreck—all the anguish of parting—and are left with the sweetest and purest memories of a life which to the few that knew it well was altogether lovely.

“My daughter comes to live with me and I shall try to make the twilight of my life as bright and pleasant as my dear wife would have wished it to be.” Etc.

Holmes (Oliver Wendell)—*continued*.

1548 **"The Clock has Struck Twelve."** Autograph Poem Signed.

Comprising five verses of 4 lines each, on 1 page, 4to. 29th November, 1853. **£15**

Slightly differing in the first lines from the published version; the author has also added at the head "For a meeting of the Clan of 1829."

"The clock has struck twelve—ere it thrice tell the hours
We shall meet round the table that blushes with flowers,
And I shall blush deeper with shame-driven blood
That I came to the banquet and brought not a bud." Etc., etc.

1549 **"Meeting of the Alumni of Harvard College."**

Autograph Manuscript of this famous Poem.

Comprising 18 verses of four long lines each, on 4 pp., 4to. 1857. **£48**

This is the autograph manuscript of his famous poetical address to Harvard College, written in 1857. The poem commences:—

"I thank you **Mr. President**, you've kindly broke the ice;
Virtue should always be the first,—I'm only **Second Vice**—
(A vice is something with a screw that's made to hold its jaw
Till some old file has played away upon an ancient saw).

Sweet brothers by the Mother's side, the babes of days gone by,
All nurselings of her Juno breasts, whose milk is never dry,
We come again, like half grown boys, and gather at her beck
About her knees and on her lap, and clinging round her neck."

1550 **"My Aunt! My dear unmarried aunt!"**

Autograph Poem Signed, six verses of 8 lines each, on 3 pp., 8vo.

Signed, and dated at end, Boston, 9th November, 1862. **£21**

One of his early and well-known poems.

"My aunt! My dear unmarried aunt!
Long years have o'er her flown;
Yet still she strains the aching clasp
That binds her virgin zone;
I know it hurts her,—though she looks
As cheerful as she can;
Her waist is ampler than her life
For life is but a span." Etc.

Holmes (Oliver Wendell)—*continued*.

1551 **“New England Dialects and Superstitions.”**

Two Autograph Manuscripts Signed, written in the form of lengthy Autograph Letters to Chas. G. Leland, Author of “Hans Brietmann Ballads” and other works.

Together extending to 10 full pp., 8vo. Boston, 4th June and 14th July, 1888. *Handsomely bound (with title-page and transcripts inserted) in full levant morocco extra, lettered on side and back.* **£52**

Anything in the nature of an Oliver Wendell Holmes manuscript very seldom occurs, and these two letters are of considerable New England interest and importance. The writer also mentions his work “The Poet at the Breakfast Table.”

In his first letter he writes:—

“ . . . Before I forget it, let me thank you for the music-sheet with my boyish ‘Oyster-man’ ballad in it. The same paper had another piece of mine ‘Aunt Tabitha’ from ‘The Poet at the Breakfast Table.’ There! I have done with myself and my trivialities, now to your purpose and questions.

“You will certainly make a most instructive, entertaining and amusing book. I seem to see myself contemplating its broad pages with their ample margins and reading straight on as if the book was a novel. To whom shall you go? you ask, to help you about New England dialects, etc.

“I think Lowell knows more about them than almost anybody. Mrs. Stowe is too old, I fear, to apply to. I do not know how much of an authority Professor Child of Harvard University—supreme in English Ballad literature—may be in native dialects. All I know is very little. I have never studied the subject, but I have come in contact with a certain number of local beliefs, superstitions, impressions, phrases, etc.

“There were two chief living sources of my information.

“1. We used to import our ‘help’ or house-servants from the interior of Massachusetts—one locality in particular, which furnished different members from several families so that they formed a Colony in Cambridge, the descendants of which are living there to this day. From these young fellows I learned the mysteries of the box-trap and the ‘figgery four’ the making of willow-whistles and elder stem pop-guns.

“From them also I learned certain beliefs such as were prevalent in early New England times. Thus that the Devil went round by night picking up things and if one signed his name in his own blood and left it out it would be gone in the morning. The same personage was thought to assist suicides in their attempts, so that a man wishing to hang himself was assisted by Satan in person as a volunteer Jack Ketch for the occasion. Other beliefs of similar origin were that one who counted the stars to a thousand would drop down dead,—that if one killed a swallow, the cow would give bloody milk. Certain sandy spots in Cambridge, one near the well-known ‘Jarvis Field’ beyond the ‘Holmes Field’ were known as ‘the Devil’s footsteps’ and looked upon with an awe not altogether displeasing.

“Passing to the domain of medicine I remember on the kitchen shelf one of our rustic employés kept an ill conditioned looking bottle said to contain ‘Hiry Pikry’—hierapecia, or sacred bitter, an alactic. Externally ‘Opodeldoc’ was the favourite application. Rum was a handy substitute, for rum was to be found everywhere. . . . The language of my immediate neighbors was of a mingled character, partly rural, partly suburban. When I should have said Excuse me—I did not intend to, these other boys
(Continued over).

Holmes (Oliver Wendell)—*continued*.

New English Dialects and Superstitions—*continued*.

would have said 'I didn't go to.' In quarrelling, not yet come to blows, it was common to hear one's afraid'n' to the daren't. I will put down a few expressions at random, such as I used to hear."

Oliver Wendell Holmes here sets out a long list of curious odd expressions and sayings, covering some four pages of his letter.

The second letter contains further information as to the dialects and superstitions prevalent in New England which the writer had come across; it also again refers to his own writings.

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Consisting of three verses of seven lines each on 1 page, 8vo. N.D.

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Be her brave peoples' friend,
On all her Realms descend,
Protect her Throne!"

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Comprising 50 lines on 2 pp., 4to. Dated at end 1st January, 1874.

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The original autograph manuscript with various corrections in the text.

"As through the forest, disarrayed
By chill November, late I strayed
A lonely minstrel of the wood
Was singing in the solitude;
I loved thy music—thus I said—
When o'er they perch the leaves were spread,
Sweet was thy song, but sweeter now
Thy carol on the leafless bough
Sing, little bird! thy note shall cheer
The sadness of the dying year." Etc.

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Send their messenger to me.

Reverently I raised the shell
That its errand it might tell,
Placed its pink lips to mine ear—
Heard its whisper low & clear.

And the murmur of the sea
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This poem was published in the now extinct St. James' Magazine for Sept., 1861.

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